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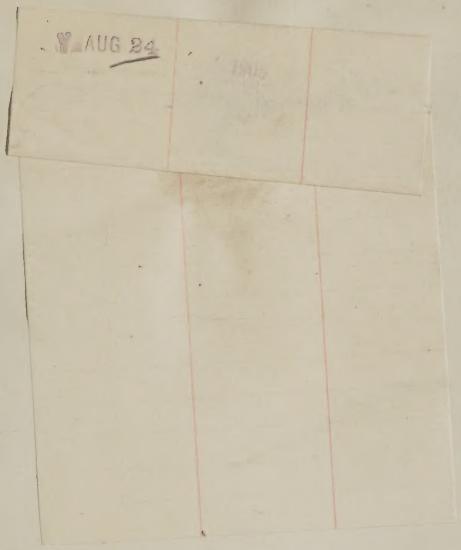
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The Committee of the BRISTOL and CLIFTON LADIES' ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY earnestly desire to submit to the attentive perusal of MINISTERS OF RELIGION the subjoined Declaration of the Rev. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia, from a sermon delivered in that city in 1846; with some Considerations founded upon it.

"Advert for one moment to the hindrances which exist to all efforts which can be made to remove slavery from the world, in consequence of the relation of *the Church* to the system. Reflect how many members of the Christian Church, and how many ministers of the gospel, are owners of slaves; how little effort is made by the great mass to dissociate themselves from the system; how many there are, even in the pulpit, who openly advocate it; how much identified the system is with all the plans of gain, and all the views of the comfort and ease of domestic life, among many members of the Church; and how faint and feeble is the voice of condemnation of the system uttered by the great mass, even of those who have no connection with it; and how often the language of apology is heard even there; and it is easy to see how ineffectual must be all efforts to remove this great evil from the world. The language of the ministry, and the practice of church members, gives such a sanction to this enormous evil as could be derived from no other source. No one can doubt that the Church of Christ, in this land, *has power to revolutionise the whole public sentiment on the subject, and to hasten the hour when, in the United States and their territories, the last shackle of the slave shall fall.*

Again,

"What is it that does most to keep the public conscience at ease on the subject? The fact that the system is countenanced by good men; that bishops and priests and deacons, that ministers and elders, that Sunday-school teachers and exhorters, that pious matrons and heiresses are the holders of slaves, and that the ecclesiastical bodies of the land address no language of rebuke or entreaty to their consciences."

"*Were all the ministers and members of the Churches to stand before the world in the sublime and noble attitude of having no connection with the system, how soon would that system come to an end!*"

The constant illustrations of the accuracy of these statements, which are presented by the current history of American religion, lead us deeply to regret recent public vindications of the course pursued by the Rev. Mr. Chickering, of Maine, and by those of his brother ministers whose connection with slave-holding churches, and whose unwillingness openly to rebuke the sin of owning property in human beings, contribute to sustain the system of American Slavery.

We have also been grieved to see professed advocates of freedom in this country uniting with those in America are its bitterest foes, by holding up to public odium men and women whose lives are consecrated to the overthrow of slavery; this course, so calculated to alienate British sympathy from the anti-slavery cause, we regard as cruel to the slave, unjust to his friends, and tending to dishonour rather than protect the religion of Christ.

While we neither participate in nor defend certain sentiments which have been attributed to individuals identified with the Abolition movements in the United States, we must protest against the absurdity as well as injustice of making a society, composed of persons of every shade of religious belief, and united solely by their opposition to slavery, responsible for the theological opinions of any of its members; and we can demonstrate that the proofs usually adduced are supplied from sources too hostile to the anti-slavery cause, to be relied on for evidence of the real meaning of the speakers, or of the views of their associates.

We ask all who resort to such expedients for screening the shortcomings of the American clergy, what justification they could receive from proving every Abolitionist an infidel? Supposing the term should apply to some of the most earnest advocates of the oppressed slave, what is the startling fact that stands prominently forward, but that Evangelical professors have *left it to infidels* to do the work of Him who "came to preach deliverance to the captive;" thus proving by their unfaithfulness to their Master, that they are more influenced by the fear and praise of man than by the plainest requisitions of the divine law.

In confirmation of the fact, (for faithfully proclaiming which Abolitionists are stigmatized as enemies of of religion) that "the American Church is the Bulwark of Slavery," we need only point to the example of the Free Presbyterians, the Free Mission Baptists, the Wesleyan Methodists, and Indiana Yearly Meeting of Anti-Slavery Friends, whose love for the religion of Christ has constrained them to secede from religious bodies contaminated by slaveholding influences, or which refuse to bear an uncompromising testimony against slavery; and to form separate societies in order to worship God acceptably, fulfil the Saviour's precepts, and propagate a pure Gospel.

While such secession is forced upon believers in every denomination who will not consent to compromise their christian principles, we trust that the Evangelical Churches of Great Britain will earnestly exhort their brethren of the United States to rescue the sacred cause of religion from the fatal dominion of slavery, and will strengthen by their sympathy the position of those societies that are bearing consistent testimony against this iniquity.

In conclusion, we desire to warn all religious bodies in our land against their danger of being implicated in the guilt of slavery, by continuing in alliance with the slaveholding organizations of America; we intreat British Christians entirely to withdraw their sanction from the most fearful oppression the world has ever witnessed; and, by throwing the weight of their influence into the scale of freedom, humanity, and righteousness, to accelerate the universal reign of pure and undefiled religion.

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